



# Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

Agenda Item No. 9.0

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## MEMORANDUM

**To:** CMAP Board

**From:** CMAP Staff

**Date:** August 3, 2011

**Re:** Community Planning Program Grants

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This memo describes recommendations for projects to be funded through the Community Planning Program grants. The Board is asked to consider approving this grant program at its meeting on August 10.

### Introduction

As part of the implementation of GO TO 2040, CMAP has partnered with the RTA on the Community Planning Program, a competitive grant program directed to local governments. While the RTA has offered this program for more than a decade, it is a new activity for CMAP, and this year marks the first time that CMAP has offered grants to local governments to support planning.

The application process for this grant program took place in spring 2011, with 20 applications submitted by the deadline of June 9, 2011. Applicants were able to direct their applications to either CMAP or the RTA; those that had an explicit focus on transit were directed to the RTA, and those that focused more generally on the integration of land use and transportation, or on transportation modes other than transit (such as bicycle and pedestrian planning) were directed to CMAP. Of the 20 applications, 10 were more suitable for the RTA's review, and the remaining 10 were more suitable for CMAP. The projects directed to CMAP include (visit [this link](#) for a short description of each):

- Village of Algonquin, downtown planning study
- Village of Bridgeview, multi-use path
- City of Chicago, redevelopment of LeClaire Courts
- Village of Downers Grove, bicycle and pedestrian plan
- City of Elgin, sidewalk gap and transit stop study
- Village of Glen Ellyn, downtown streetscape and parking study
- Village of Hillside, comprehensive plan
- Village of Plainfield, transportation plan

- City of Waukegan, bicycle and transportation plan
- Village of Wheeling, active transportation plan

**Funding availability**

While CMAP and the RTA worked together closely to use shared application forms and timelines, and significant consultation between the agencies has taken place in evaluating proposals, each agency is retaining authority over its own funding decisions. CMAP has allocated \$700,000 to the Community Planning Program grants from federal Unified Work Program (UWP) funds and state match. In its current year budget, CMAP has also allocated \$300,000 in additional state funds for grants to local governments. This additional \$300,000 could be used for Community Planning Program grants, or for grants of other types to local governments, with details to be determined later in the year. In summary, the amount of funding available for Community Planning Program grants from CMAP is somewhat flexible, between \$700,000 and \$1 million.

**Funding recommendations**

The preliminary staff recommendation is to fund 8 of the 10 projects that submitted applications to CMAP, at a total funding level of slightly over \$700,000. Each recommended project advances the goals of GO TO 2040, as demonstrated through the initial applications (all online at [this link](#)) and follow-up interviews with each applicant. These projects, and the recommended funding levels for each, are shown in the table below.

Community	Project	Amount
Algonquin	Downtown Algonquin Planning Study	\$90,000
Chicago	Redevelopment of LeClaire Courts	\$120,000
Downers Grove	Bikeway and Pedestrian Plan	\$80,000
Elgin	Sidewalk Gap and Transit Stop Study	\$100,000
Glen Ellyn	Downtown Streetscape and Parking Study	\$50,000
Hillside	Comprehensive Plan	\$100,000
Plainfield	Transportation Plan	\$120,000
Wheeling	Active Transportation Plan	\$80,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$740,000</b>

Only two projects are not recommended to receive funding. The projects, and the justification for not recommending funding for each, are below:

- The Village of Bridgeview applied for funding for a multi-use path through the community. While the project is beneficial, it is also quite advanced and a route for the path and some design elements have already been identified. At this point, it is more appropriate for the project to seek engineering or construction funds rather than planning funds; conducting additional planning studies would have limited benefit. The Village has already applied for construction funds through the Congestion

Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program; while this application was not successful, CMAP will encourage the Village to continue seeking construction funds from various sources.

- The City of Waukegan applied for funding to create a bicycle and pedestrian plan. CMAP is currently working with Waukegan through the Local Technical Assistance program, and expects the first product to be a “planning prioritization report”, which will review past plans and studies in Waukegan and make recommendations for what the City’s priorities for new planning work should be. Until this prioritization work is done, staff does not recommend committing resources to the proposed bicycle and pedestrian plan. The project has merits, and could be a good candidate for funding next year, if it is identified as one of the City’s top priorities for planning investment.
- In addition, it should be noted the project submitted by the Village of Plainfield was reduced in scope from the original application. The original project scope involved developing a transportation plan for the entire community, with elements related to roadways, transit, bicycle and pedestrian travel, and freight, as well as estimations of cost and programming of transportation improvements into the Village’s capital improvements plan. Plainfield is a large and growing community, and the cost of the submitted project would be quite high; therefore, CMAP worked with the Village to focus the project geographically in the downtown area, lowering the cost to a level comparable to the other funded projects.

### **Evaluation process**

Each submitted project was scored according to the criteria included in the application form (available at [this link](#)). The scoring was done by a team of CMAP staff based on the submitted applications as well as follow-up interviews and in some cases site visits with the applicants. Quantitative scores for each project are available upon request.

Summaries of the applications were also provided to each of the working committees, which were given an opportunity to comment on projects at the committee meetings or through separate communications later. CMAP staff also met with representatives of the region’s transit providers (CTA, Metra, Pace, and RTA) to discuss projects that impacted the transit system. Input from these groups was considered in making the funding recommendations.

### **Next steps**

A recommendation for approval from the Local Coordinating Committee to the CMAP Board will be sought at the Committee’s meeting on August 10. Once approval is received from the CMAP Board and the MPO Policy Committee (which in this case has designated the Transportation Committee to act on its behalf on August 5), CMAP will begin to work with successful applicants to enter into intergovernmental agreements and initiate procurement processes, with startup of each project expected within several months.

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**ACTION REQUESTED:** Consider approving the Community Planning Program.

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